reflection notes

Series: The Circle Maker
Message #4: THINK LONG

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions & scriptures are designed to help you take the next step. If you are leading a group through this guide, don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick out those questions that will stir up conversation & action among your Hope Team or throughout the week with your family & friends.

We live in a time when ALL the data in the world is available with a click of a mouse. Into our fast-paced culture God speaks and reminds us that prayer is a lot like planting. It demands patience, consistency, and dependence on the only One who can bring rain.

Each prayer is like a seed that gets planted in the ground. It disappears for a season, but it eventually bears fruit that blesses future generations. In fact, our prayers will bear fruit forever.

⇒ Tell about a life experience where you had to wait patiently, much longer than you wanted to wait.
⇒ How did this waiting shape and form you and your thoughts about what was happening?
⇒ How might the experience have ended differently if you could have rushed things and made them happen quickly?

With your Bible or YouVersion, read Daniel 6:1-10

⇒ Who was King Darius going to promote over his kingdom and why?
⇒ What are some of the ways that life, and even our culture, can get in the way of us praying and devoting the time and passion we need to prayer?
⇒ What can you do to recognize and get around those roadblocks or obstacles that hinder your prayer life?
⇒ What is happening in your life that demands immediate prayer attention, but your schedule and responsibilities seem to be in the way?
⇒ How can this team pray for and with you right now about these needs, challenges or situations?

With your Bible or YouVersion, read Daniel 10:1-21 & Ephesians 6:10-13

⇒ What did you learn about the reality of spiritual warfare and the battles we face as Christ Followers?
⇒ Why is it important that we recognize spiritual conflicts and are willing to enter into battle in prayer?
⇒ What is the importance of fasting, partnered with prayer, as we battle against the work of the enemy?
⇒ Tell about a time when you fasted in and prayed and the tell of results of this pairing of these essential disciplines?

With your Bible or YouVersion, read Matthew 7:7-8

⇒ What does Jesus call us to do in this passage and what is the promise attached to our obedience?
⇒ What is one specific and practical way you can follow this teaching and take action in the coming week?
⇒ How can your team members pray with you and cheer you on as you move forward in this area of your life and faith?

Closing Prayer: Take time as a Team and pray the following:

1. Ask God to help you stay patient in prayer so you can keep circling and planting for the sake of generations that will come after you.
2. Pray for each child and grandchild represented in your team.
3. Pray for courage, focus and self discipline to add fasting as a regular spiritual discipline in our personal lives.
4. Thank God for those people that planted seeds of prayer in your life.
5. Ask God to give you direction about how this series of messages and study can influence and impact Hope Springs Church.

Weekly Reflection: Take time in the to reflect on these questions.

1) What derails me from praying the way I should? What can I do to get past these hindrances and pray w/ greater power?
2) How can I get in closer proximity to the things and people I need to pray for?
3) What new posture can I take to help me focus and become more intent in prayer?
4) Who has prayed for me faithfully? How can I bless, honor and affirm them?
5) When can I plan a time to pray and fast over something important?

For Families w/ Kids:

It is our heart to resource parents for conversations at home w/ their children. Feel free to take the time to talk about the message and the week at dinner, before bedtime prayers or any other times you find it convenient.

Read Daniel 6:1-28 and discuss it together.

- Who was chosen to be the leader over the 120 princes and watch out over the King's interests in those areas?
- What were some of the good qualities of Daniel's life that might have put him in position to be considered for a position of leadership?
- In verses 6-9 what did the princes and administrators do to try to get Daniel in trouble?
- How many people do you think this law was going to really affect?
- Why do you think that King Darius was distressed about the news of Daniel praying?
- In verse 16 what good character traits did King Darius say about Daniel?
- Who was it that finally rescued Daniel?
- What was the new law that Darius in verses 26-27?
- What does the Bible say happened to Daniel after Darius put the new law into practice?